

THE  
ANNALS OF CHICAGO:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE CHICAGO LYCEUM,

JANUARY 21, 1840,

BY

*JOSEPH N. BALESTIER.*

REPUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION OF 1840,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION,

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR IN 1876,

AND ALSO

A REVIEW OF THE LECTURE,

PUBLISHED IN THE

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## INTRODUCTION.

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My old friend, Mr. Robert Fergus, of Chicago, has applied to me to say some words introductory to his re-publication of a lecture delivered by me in that city, in the year 1840, entitled "The Annals of Chicago."

Mr. Fergus having incurred the expense of causing that lecture to be copied in manuscript at the Wisconsin State Library, from the original edition printed by Edward H. Rudd, in 1840, it would be ungracious in me to refuse his request.

The existence of a copy of the original edition at Madison was made known through a clever article published in the *Chicago Tribune*, August 25th, 1872, which Mr. Fergus intends to make a part of his present pamphlet. Many years ago, the British Museum advertised for a copy, which I then tried to obtain, but, after diligent efforts, I was unable to find one; which would seem to argue that hardly anybody—not even the author—thought such a trifle worth preserving. Mr. Joseph Sabin, the eminent bibliophile of New York, whose labors to perpetuate the memory of even the small and obscure things appertaining to American history are entitled to all praise, lately showed me copies of the title pages of this and another of my vagrant bantlings, in a proof-sheet of

one of the numbers of his invaluable Dictionary. He knew that he had obtained the title of the Chicago lecture directly from a copy of the original publication, but he did not recollect where that copy could be found.

Up to the present time, therefore, I may justly rank myself among the very rare authors of the world, and I ought, perhaps, to regret that I am now to be made cheap and common. But, inasmuch as a conflagration in the State Library of Wisconsin might cause my "Annals" to share the fate of the lost "Annals," of my brother historian, Livy, I not only forgive my friend Fergus for taking my coat, but shall proceed to give him my cloak also.

Mr. Fergus is a typographical pioneer in Chicago. He was connected with Rudd when the "Annals" were printed, in 1840. I find his imprint in Mrs. Kinzie's Narrative of the Chicago Massacre, published in 1844. But, since then, he has grown even faster than the city; from being a simple citizen, he has expanded into a corporation, and I am told it requires a large building to contain the Fergus Printing Company. May his shadow never be less, and may he earn the gratitude of future generations by rescuing from oblivion the history of Ancient Chicago—part of which he was.

In speaking of young Mr. Balestier's lecture, I am conscious of no personal feeling; I knew the young man well in 1840, when he and I were five-and-twenty, but I know him only historically now, when he and I are one-and-sixty. I, therefore, feel little delicacy in alluding to his performance in 1840.

At that day, all that remained to support life in



Chicago was hope. The poverty of the place was visible and unfeigned. The more land a man had, the worse off he apparently was. Money and the people had long been strangers. But there were few who despaired, for the Genius of the place forbade. To the dullest eye it was evident that a great destiny awaited our muddy little town, squatted upon the low banks of its sluggish bayou. The converts of Brother Hinton, who were baptised in shoals—generally in cold weather—in a sort of cove or slough which came in from the river near State Street, were not more hopeful of heaven than the average Chicago citizen of its manifest destiny. But the people were very poor, and none more so than the younger members of the bar. If, therefore, in 1841, the author of the “Annals” left the city for his ancient home, it was not that he loved Chicago less, but his family more—not that his will, but his poverty, consented. But his heart has ever been with the home of his earliest manhood, and he has always rejoiced in its immense prosperity and gloried in its marvellous achievements.

How much has come and gone in the intervening years! What exultations, what heart-aches, what labors of the brain, what strains of the nerves and senses, what joys, what sorrows, what errors, what atonements, what hopes, what disappointments, what regrets, what satisfactions, what serene calms, what wild emotions, what anxious days, and, perhaps, remorseful nights, have done their ceaseless work upon our bodies and minds, and fashioned us to be what we are! How often have we envied those of our old number who died young, and so escaped the cares and tur-

moils and temptations of life, bearing only their youthful sins to the feet of the Divine Compassion! And yet how, in the main, we have wished to live on, and, as a body, have lived on, to see our little wooden hamlet become a mighty city; to see that city swept away in a day; and, after the tears of the world had been poured upon its smouldering ruins, and the benevolence of the world had fed its hungry and clothed its naked, to see it rise again, in five-fold majesty and grandeur!

Perhaps those of us who have lived outside of all this marvellous growth, and anxiously watched it, can, better than those who have dwelt in the midst of it, appreciate the Chicago of to-day.

It was the boast of Augustus that he found Rome a city of brick, and should leave it one of marble. Long before Augustus, wooden Rome was swept by frequent conflagrations, and, perhaps, the fire-proof Rome of to-day may owe something to that circumstance. It may be doubted whether the people of Chicago sufficiently value the lesson twice taught them, and, perhaps, yet again to be taught them, through the discipline of fire. The present population found a city of wooden shanties, and will leave behind them one of brick and stone. But numbers still sigh for the liberty to build fire-traps, in which to catch their neighbors' houses, and it will yet require nerve and decision to resist their selfish efforts to reinstate the pine shanty in its ancient glory. But such efforts should be resisted to the utmost in a city whose winds are fierce and unbridled, and whose lots are so laid out as to admit of the closest packing.

The people of Chicago, as a whole — of course,

there are many exceptions—have never been lodged according to their means, and it is time they learned to appreciate the amenities of life which flow from pleasant and elegant household associations. The first step is to eschew wooden homes, which are suited only to the country. The idea that the prohibition of wooden exteriors for dwellings retards any desirable growth, is not well founded. The general use of brick, stone, and iron will of itself draw to the city a large and valuable population of skilled artisans and laborers, and establish numerous permanent industries connected with house building. It will add vastly to the visible wealth and beauty of the city, unless a penuriously cheap and wretched class of brick buildings, like those in English manufacturing towns, shall be erected. A mean, wooden town to live in, surrounding a city of palaces to trade in, would disappoint visitors and disturb the complacency of residents. Of course, the time has not come for Chicago to build whole streets of palatial mansions, as New York has done. Not for many a year will Chicago be able to rival New York in solid wealth, and the consequent costliness of houses and lands. But comely and comfortable dwellings, built of materials which do not feed, but resist, the flames, can be built at a moderate cost, and their substantial, city-like air will impart a sense of solidity, security, and self-respect to the whole community.

I observe that the writer of the “Annals” spoke kindly of the Press of Chicago, as it existed in his early day, and praised the impoverished public for its liberal support of newspapers. I have a dim recollection of a young man who wrote a good deal for



the "American—published daily." In those days editors wrote sharp—not to say abusive—squibs, against their brethren; and, perhaps, they were not too fond of fair play in their treatment of each other. Among the moral prodigies of the past thirty-five years, is the total disappearance of all scurrility and injustice from the newspapers. This is notably the case in Chicago, where all is courtesy and respect between editors; where everything is fair in politics; and the scriptural question, "Art thou in health, my brother?" is always scripturally put. Whether we owe this growing amenity and fraternal suavity to the increasing civilization and enlightenment of the age, or to the efforts of the clergy to advance Christian fellowship, and cultivate Christian graces, is a problem for casuists.

Be that as it may, the Chicago Press of to-day is an absolute marvel. No material wonder which the city has wrought is so wonderful as its Press. To say nothing of several good evening papers, there are three large morning dailies—literally dailies, published every day in the year—which supply a mass of news, correspondence, statistics, and all else that goes to make up a first-rate metropolitan journal. The editorial ability displayed is not a whit behind the general excellence of these papers. Only a most intelligent community would support such an array of talent as is employed upon the Chicago Press.

It is not my purpose to talk about statistics. Are they not written down in a hundred books and pamphlets? and do wonders ever cease in Chicago? and can the wonderer say which wonder is the most wonderful?



The Water-works, the Parks, the Tunnels, the Stock Yards, the Schools, the Churches, the Elevators, the Railroads, the Lumber Yards, the Packing Houses, the new city of Commercial Palaces, the unequalled Hotels, the enormous growths of Population, Manufactures, Railway and Maritime Commerce, and the Wholesale Trade: these and many other things are marvels which point unerringly to the time when Chicago will be—next to New York and its suburbs—the largest and most important city on the American Continent.

What she most needs now is capital belonging to herself, to be used only for herself. Capital to furnish money to agricultural producers as far west as the Rocky Mountains—to foster the ever-increasing industries which cluster around her walls—to store and control the surplus products of the boundless west—to deal directly with Europe—to share directly in the overland Asiatic trade—to intercept the mineral riches of the western mountains, and draw the iron and copper and silver ores of Lake Superior into her furnaces. Every year adds something to the home-owned capital of Chicago. Small, indeed, is it now, compared with that of the great eastern metropolis. But it will grow and expand, and the city with it, so that another thirty-five years will astonish the man now twenty-five years old, as much as the retrospect of thirty-five years astounds the sexagenarian of to-day.

But what are the people of Chicago doing to keep intelligent rich men, and their cultivated families, among them? Poor young attorneys can easily—perhaps thankfully—be spared. But what are the people doing to keep among them their millionaires

of taste and culture? or those of them who wish to improve the taste and culture of themselves and their children? Why is it that so many of this important class have taken wing and fled away with their wealth to more genial abodes, drawing their rents from Chicago tenants, but spending them elsewhere? This is a question worthy of all consideration. The answer is, that certain attractions are needed to hold such men. The more Chicago fosters literature, art, the drama, and music, for the public, and the more generally culture, elegance, and even luxury are to be found in private circles, the more desirable Chicago will become as a residence for the rich. Parks are of no use, unless ample means and skilled men are provided for their immediate improvement. Boulevards are frauds, unless they are speedily and thoroughly finished, and then kept in order. Artists are a superfluity, unless they are generously patronized. The drama is a nuisance, unless managers are liberally sustained and encouraged to be enterprising, and so to the end of the chapter.

Perhaps Chicago may be remiss in none of these things. Perhaps her Parks, her Boulevards, her studios, her theatres, her concert-halls are all in a flourishing condition. None deny that her social life presents great attractions, but it may NOT be true that the opulent do all in their power to make it brilliant and fascinating to the extent of retaining those citizens who have withdrawn from active life. Perhaps they do not even sustain a first-rate club of the best people, with a first-class reading-room attached—a club which provides exquisitely and at moderate cost for the inner man bodily, and which caters liberally

for the inner man mentally, by furnishing not only the best newspapers, but also the best magazines and pictorial publications of the entire world.

Finally, what has been the effect of the Great Fire upon Chicago? At this hour, in the midst of a fresh spasm of "hard times," caused by the collapse of gigantic eastern speculations, and the clamor of the equally cocksure, and, perhaps, equally mistaken, rival financial doctrinaires, we find Chicago rich and prosperous. Those who can do so are holding on to their property. Perhaps they remember that Cornelia bought the house of Marius for \$12,000, and a short time after sold it to Lucullus for \$80,000. What would have been the condition of the city now, had no abnormal drain been made upon her resources by the utter destruction of more than a hundred million dollars' worth of property, over and above outside insurances, besides a vast temporary loss of trade? Who can say? Perhaps at this time she might have been able to drive back the tide of disaster, and measurably restore general confidence. At all events her position, although strong, would have been vastly stronger, and the increase of her wealth and population very much greater.

But, in the end, both the greater and the lesser conflagrations will have proved of general benefit, although to many, calamities without remedy. The new grade of the streets, with the greatly increased facilities of conforming to it in practice, is of incalculable importance. The magnificent city of commercial palaces and princely hotels, built with a certain approach to uniformity and mutual fitness, which has taken the place of the medley of grand



and mean structures, built on varying planes, will enure to the permanent advantage of the city. And especially, the annihilation of masses of inflammable hovels, in places where they were most dangerous and least wanted, and the future exclusion of wooden houses from the entire city, cannot fail to prove immensely beneficial to the common welfare.

If, in the year 1911, the belated traveller, who has just missed the air-boat at Sitka, shall curiously look over the volumes in the Alaska State Library—warmly bound in seal-skin—he may chance to alight upon this modest pamphlet. He will be a Chicago man, and will have left behind him, a week before, a proud and opulent city of two million inhabitants; a city built of non-inflammable materials, partly within and partly without the forty miles of boulevard which the foresight of the present has wisely and liberally provided for the use of the future. Will it be too much to ask of him to telegraph a sprightly review of these then forgotten pages to the *Chicago Tribune*, by the new process? My heirs will cheerfully pay the expense.

And so I conclude the pleasant task assigned to me by my friend Fergus, and if I have said aught to offend, let it be laid to his charge.

J. N. BALESTIER.

BRATTLEBORO, VT., Jan. 1, 1876.



J. N. BALESTIER, Esq.,

SIR,—Having with much gratification listened to your lecture on the Annals of Chicago, delivered before the Lyceum, on the 21st inst., and being desirous to preserve it for future reference, as well as anxious to place it in the power of others to participate in the gratification and instruction which it has already imparted to us, we would respectfully solicit a copy for publication.

Respectfully yours,

GRANT GOODRICH,  
WM. B. OGDEN,  
SIDNEY SAWYER,  
MARK SKINNER,  
DAVID HUNTER,  
JNO. S. WRIGHT.

CHICAGO, Jan. 24, 1840.

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CHICAGO, Jan. 24, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,—I take pleasure in complying with the request conveyed by your communication of this date. You will however permit me to say, that the flattering terms, in which your note is couched, are attributable rather to the kindness of your feelings towards myself, than to the merits of the humble production which I now place at your disposal. I have taken the liberty to add a few notes to the lecture, which I trust will meet with your approbation.

I am, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

J. N. BALESTIER.

To GRANT GOODRICH, Esq.,

President of the Lyceum, and Others.



# ANNALS OF CHICAGO.

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MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LYCEUM :

In presenting this hurried and imperfect sketch, I make no pretension to the name of a historian. The means of preparing the historical parts of it, have been limited and inadequate:—the original sources of information have not been within my reach, and my materials are drawn from those who have had access to the ancient records. So much, therefore, as may be said of the Early History of Chicago, is necessarily superficial. It shall be my endeavor to treat the subject as concisely as may be consistent with its full development, avoiding all details which can be properly dispensed with.

Chicago is probably one of the oldest settlements in the Far West. Before it was inhabited by the Whites, it had been, from time immemorial, occupied by the Aborigines. Major Long remarks, “that the number and apparent antiquity of the trails centering in this spot, indicated that Chicago had, for a long time, been the site of an Indian village.”

The French were the original discoverers and settlers, not only of this place, but also of nearly all the important points in the original North-west Territory.

It is an honorable and enduring monument to that great nation, that her sons should have abandoned their happy homes, three hundred years ago, for the wild forests and desert prairies of savage America. And it is an imperishable honor to universal philanthropy, that her religious ministers, vindicating their right to the proud name of Jesuits, should have braved the stormy sea in small, frail vessels, to encounter, upon the land, the savages of the forest. We hear much of the toils and sufferings of the Pilgrim Fathers; but the hardships endured by the French emigrants, many years before, and in a region more remote from the seaboard, are passed over in comparative silence. When we reflect, that the French left their country from the impulses of enterprise and religious zeal, while the English pilgrims were driven from their native shore by persecution; that the French came over nearly one hundred years before the Puritans, settling far in the interior, and pushing their discoveries midway between the oceans: much as we may admire the heroism and sublime energy of the Fathers of New England, we cannot withhold the palm from the dauntless sons of France. As early as 1534, more than three hundred years ago, the French began their discoveries and settlements in America. Two ships, each of only 60 tons burthen, left France on the 20th of April, 1534, and arrived at St. Malo on the 15th of September, in the same year,—having spent nearly five months upon the ocean. This expedition was under the command of Admiral Cartier, who, on that occasion, surveyed the northern coast of Newfoundland. On the 15th of May, 1535, Cartier made a second expedition, his



squadron consisting of three vessels, one of 120, one of 60, and one of 40 tons burthen. In September, 1535, he ascended the St. Lawrence, as far as the Isle of Orleans; the Indians opposed his farther progress, but he continued to advance, until he reached Montreal, which he founded by the name of Mont-royal. In 1540, King Francis I. granted an extensive charter to François de la Roque, Chevalier de Roberval, and in the summer of that year a squadron of five vessels sailed, under the command of the gallant Cartier.

For the next sixty years, nothing was done towards exploring that part of America. But in 1603, Samuel Champlain led another expedition, and, in 1608, founded Quebec. In 1612, Champlain made his second expedition, under the patronage of the Prince de Conté, who assumed the title of Vice-Roy of New-France. Setting a good example to the emigrants, by taking his family with him, he continued the settlement of the country, notwithstanding the hostility of the Indians. In 1622, a number of Jesuits were sent to Canada by the Duc de Ventadour for the purpose of converting the Indians to Christianity.

In 1627, Cardinal de Richelieu organized the company of New France, and Champlain was appointed Governor. In 1629, Champlain was compelled to surrender Canada to the English, but it was restored in 1632. Again appointed Governor, Champlain put forth the powers of his enlarged mind, and under his administration the colony flourished. The indefatigable Jesuits came over in great numbers, bearing the cross and the olive branch, preaching the gospel and extending civilization. Many of them afterwards fell

victims to their holy zeal, and sealed their faith with the blood of martyrdom.

The first visit of the French to this place was, probably, as far back as 1572, being two hundred and sixty-eight years ago. In that year, Mons. Joliet and Father Marquette paddled up the Illinois river from its mouth, and crossed over to Michigan. From the fact that a great number of trails led to this spot, we may infer that these early explorers passed through Chicago on their way to Michigan. For a century after this period I find no evidence that this place was revisited by the French.

But about the year 1670, Count de Frontenac, then Governor of Canada, caused an exploration of the shores of the great lakes, and it is not improbable that the surveying party touched at Chicago.

Perrot is said to have been here in 1671.\* At that remote period it was the residence of a chief of the Miamies, and bore the same name which it does at present—a name which ought to savor of antiquity, as it signifies something exceedingly odoriferous.

The expeditions of LaSalle and Hennepin, about the year 1680, are well known. The generous spirit of enterprise could be carried no further. If toils cheerfully encountered, and sufferings, borne without a murmur; if courage that danger and disaster could not tame, and perseverance that difficulty and disappointment could not subdue, are worthy of commendation—then may these men command our admiration and gratitude. Far distant be the day when we forget these heroic deeds of the men of France; let us imitate their virtues while we emulate

\* Hoffman.

their enterprise. The fame of those bold navigators and explorers, of those far-sighted statesmen, those patient priests of the order of Jesus, should be dear to us, who reap joys from their sorrows, and ease from their sufferings. We owe to France an older debt than we incurred in our revolution, and it were worse than ungrateful not to acknowledge it.

It is said that the French, at one time, occupied Chicago as a military and trading post. Their discerning judgment could not fail to appreciate its importance. They doubtless remarked that it was the eye of the lower lakes, an eligible commercial site, and a commanding military position. How surely has time, in numerous instances, attested the sagacity of those early emigrants! Let us now pass to a later period, and confine ourselves more immediately to the subject under consideration.

In the year 1795, the Indians ceded to the United States six miles square of territory, which embraced Chicago. In 1804, the United States established here a military post, which was called Fort Chicago, and about the same period the American Fur Company established a trading station under the guns of the Fort. Until 1812, nothing occurred to disturb the tranquility of this remote and forlorn military and trading station; but that year was marked by the perpetration of a deed, black even in the records of savage ferocity.

After the capitulation at Detroit, orders were sent to Captain Heald to abandon the Fort at this place. On the 15th of August, the troops evacuated it. The Americans numbered about seventy-five, including women and children; and about thirty Miamies, com-



manded by Captain Wells, of Fort Wayne, acted as their escort. The road lay along the beach of the lake. The devoted little band had proceeded scarcely a mile and a-half, when they discovered the Indians lying in ambush, behind the sand hills which skirted the beach. Heald at once led his men to the top of the hill, and after firing one round, charged the enemy in front. It was in vain. Greatly superior in numbers, the foe formed on the flanks as fast as they were repulsed in front. The small but gallant force of the Americans was surrounded, while the escort of Miamies took no part in the conflict. The result may be readily foreseen; not only were more than half the troops slaughtered, but the helpless and unoffending women and children were butchered in cold blood!

Mr. Hoffman, in a note to his "Winter in the West," imputes the blame of this horrid tragedy to Captain Wells, whom he erroneously styles "the credulous Indian Agent." He alleges that the retreat was precipitated by Wells, who had been duped by the Indians.\*

Mr. Lanman, the ingenious historian of Michigan, to whom I am chiefly indebted for the foregoing historical data, remarks, on the other hand, that Wells was not at that time connected with the Indian Department; that doubting the good faith of the Potawatamies, he advised an immediate evacuation before they should have time to concentrate around the Fort, but that Heald disregarded his counsel; that four hundred Indians collected around the Fort before the troops retreated; that Heald exasperated the Indians by destroying the surplus stores and

\* See note A.



ammunition which had been promised to them; that Capt. Wells and Mr. John Kinzie, the Indian Agent, then remonstrated against a retreat, but that Heald determined to evacuate, because the destruction of the ammunition and stores impaired the means of defense. There can be no doubt that this is the true version of the story. Wells had been bred an Indian warrior, and was perfectly familiar with the habits of the savages; he was a bold and intrepid man, a tried and skilful soldier; he fell among the first in the conflict, and his body was found with the face blackened, after the manner of the savages when they meet with disappointment.

After the consummation of this revolting massacre, the Indians burned down the Fort. It was rebuilt in 1817, and its name changed to Fort Dearborn. In the spring of 1837, Fort Dearborn was abandoned, and since that time the barracks have been occupied by private families.

Let us now glance at Chicago, as it appeared to Major Long, in 1823. This gentleman has published a history of his expedition; his description of Chicago is far from alluring. "The village," says he "presents no cheering prospect, as, notwithstanding its antiquity, it contains but few huts, inhabited by a miserable race of men, scarcely equal to the Indians, from whom they are descended. Their log or bark houses are low, filthy, and disgusting, displaying not the least trace of comfort. As a place of business, it offers no inducements to the settler, for the whole amount of the trade of the lake did not exceed the cargo of five or six schooners, even at the time when the garrison received its supplies from Mackinac."

Such, Mr. President, is the picture of Chicago in 1823. It may be too broad and unqualified, but the sketch is substantially true.\* Such was the germ from which has sprung this vigorous and growing city; and such did Chicago continue to be until only eight years ago. Well may we exclaim

“Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer’s cloud,  
Without our special wonder?”

Within so brief a space, within eight short years, and during a period when commercial calamity haswhelmed the land in comparative ruin, can we realize, Sir, that Chicago has sprung, as it were, from the very mire, and assumed the aspect of a populous city?—That she has awakened from the slumbers of ages, and gone forth like the strong man in the armor of enterprise and perseverance, until her name is inscribed among the cities of the earth?

You, Sir, I believe, are among the oldest settlers. Within less than eight years, you have witnessed this magic change. Scarce a day has passed within that period that has not brought with it some improvement. The memory is at fault when it attempts to keep pace with this rapid progression. Well may we rejoice in a result so glorious! Well may we inquire for that Chicago which, within our memory, was but a wet plain, intersected by a narrow river, lying desolate and silent upon the edge of yonder waste of waters! Then the voice of the waves, as they rolled heavily upon the beach, was feebly answered by the voices of men; now, the hum of business drowns the music of the waters, and the air resounds with the cheering echo of labor. Capacious warehouses and commo-

\* See note B.

dious dwellings have taken the place of "the log and bark houses, low, filthy, and disgusting."—"The miserable race of men" have been superseded by a population distinguished for its intelligence and enterprise; and all the comforts of our Eastern homes are gathered around us.

And, Sir, the superficial and contemptuous dictum that, "as a place of business, Chicago offers no inducements to the settler,"—where shall we find it verified? Even at this proximate period, we laugh to scorn the discernment of the narrator. And our commerce—who can realize the change within the last seven years? Then the arrival of a fore-and-aft schooner was an event worthy of being chronicled; it resembled the visit of a ship to some remote and desert island; and when the little craft stood in for the dangerous shore, the inhabitants all turned out to witness the prodigy! Sir, the garrison is gone—the vessels from Mackinac bring it no more supplies—yet wonderful to relate! our commerce still survives. The garrison is gone—but the vessels still come; not at the rate of five or six in a year, but at the rate of five or six hundred; and, in a few years, hundreds will be thousands. No curiosity is excited by the advent of a schooner, and even the vapor-driven monsters, which frequent our harbor, have ceased to call forth our wonder!

In 1828, and perhaps until 1830, that part of the original town, which lies east of the South Branch, and south of the main river, was fenced in and used by the garrison for pasture land. In 1830, the canal commissioners sold a number of lots, some of the best in the city bringing from fifty to one hundred dollars.



At that time, the place contained only five or six houses, built of logs, and the population was less than one hundred. One of those houses is still occupied by Col. Beaubien, and was formerly the property of the Fur Company. About eighty rods to the south of that, there formerly stood a house occupied by Col. Owings, the Indian Agent, but the remorseless lake has washed it away. An "old settler," formerly occupied by Dr. Alexander Wolcott, and, at a later day, Sir, by yourself, is still standing on Block No. 1—its ancient name, "Cobweb Castle," is known to few of the present generation. Another old dwelling is on the point of land known as Block 14, which it is intended to excavate for a Canal basin. The dwelling of Mr. John Kinzie, formerly Indian agent, and also agent for the Fur Company, stood near the spot where the north pier commences. There was also a cabin at Wolf Point, in which Robinson the Indian Chief resided. Another log building formerly stood near the corner of Dearborn and South Water streets, which was occupied as a store by Medard B. Beaubien. The celebrated tavern of Mr. Mark Beaubien, known as the Eagle, stood on the site of the Sauganash. I grieve to say that no trace of this model of Chicago Inns can now be found, so unsparing is time! The first frame building in Chicago was a store at Wolf Point, built for Robert A. Kinzie, in 1832. Several brick buildings were erected in the year 1834.

The Indian war in 1832, first brought Chicago into general notice. General Scott was deeply impressed with its importance, and was among the first to recommend a harbor, in a letter which was laid before Congress.



At the session of 1833-4, Congress made an appropriation for our harbor, and its progress, thus far, has been slow but steady. Several superintendents have had charge of this important work, among whom Capt. James Allen deserves particular notice. It may be proper to remark here the changes effected in the land marks since the construction of the piers. Formerly, the river made a bend, and ran south about half a mile, along what is now the beach of the lake. The mouth of the river was then on section 15, and a wide sand-bar lay between the river and the lake. The present mouth of the river is entirely artificial, having been created by cutting through the sand-bar. Of late years, the bar has entirely disappeared, partly by reason of the rising of the lake, and partly by a change in the action of the water, caused by the piers. The consequence has been, that several acres of the Fort Dearborn Addition, deprived of the protection afforded by the bar, have been washed away, and deposited in the old bed of the river, which is rapidly filling up.

In 1833, a great Indian payment took place, at which some of the inhabitants distinguished themselves by their dexterity in basely stealing blankets from the ignorant and besotted Indians.

The year 1836, is especially memorable in the annals of Chicago. An unregulated spirit of speculation had manifested itself very decidedly throughout the whole country in the year 1835, which in the succeeding year, attained its acme. The cities of the East were visited with an epidemic madness, which found its way into every hamlet in the Atlantic States. It was suddenly discovered that the Amer-

ican people had labored under serious misapprehensions with regard to the value of land, especially that which lay in cities and villages. No sooner was this startling discovery made, than the price of real property suddenly rose a hundred, and, frequently, a thousand fold. Sagacious men, looking far into the future, now perceived that cities and villages, covering only a few acres of land, were soon destined to extend over an illimitable domain. Visions of the glorious future filled the imaginations of the multitude; wherever the surveyor took the magic chain and compass—no matter how remote from population—there it became certain, that a mighty city would, at no distant day, arise. Paper cities flourished in a manner unparalleled, and the public mind became utterly diseased.

This unwholesome spirit was confined to no classes—it extended itself into every walk of life. The farmer forsook the plow, and became a speculator upon the soil, instead of a producer from beneath the sod. If happily a city or a village were in the vicinity, the farm was laid off in lots, and exhibited on a map. The mechanic laid aside his tools and resolved to grow rich without labor. The lawyer sold his books and invested the proceeds in lands. The physician “threw physic to the dogs,” and wrote promissory notes instead of prescriptions. Even the day-laborer became learned in the mysteries of quit-claim and warranty, and calculated his fortune by thousands.

When the mass of the community thus abandoned or neglected their proper pursuits, it may readily be assumed that the ignoble few, who were willing to

work, received an ample reward for their pains. The price of labor was exorbitant; the simplest service was purchased at a dear rate. Even the barbers, who, since the days of Abraham, had shaved for six-pence, discovered that they had been working at half-price. The great increase of consumers, and the proportionate decrease of producers, rendered the price of provisions enormous.

To the merchant especially, this appeared to be the golden era; but alas! he soon learned that it was the age of dross. Had he been prudent—had he confined himself to his proper vocation, and kept clear of over-expansion, he might have done well. But the spirit of the times drowned the voice of reason. Credit, reckless and indiscriminate, was the master-principle of those wild and maddening days. Overleaping every barrier, disdaining restraint, tempting the inexperienced and unwary, laughing to scorn the calculating and prudent, alluring the ignorant and avaricious—the evil spirit went forth, sowing at broadcast the prolific seeds of bankruptcy and ruin.

To the abuse of *credit* then, did the country, in a great degree, owe its disaster. Already had the banks, which greatly multiplied at this period, issued sufficient paper promises to create a spirit of wild extravagance; but the property of the country rose too rapidly in value to be represented by an inflated bank-note circulation. Individuals, therefore, in humble imitation of the banks, issued their notes without stint or limit. The merchant trusted, without discrimination, all who chose to buy, and he gloried in the fictitious profits which appeared upon his ledger. He thought it prudent to diversify his pursuits by



purchasing land on credit, confiding in his surplus profits as a means of payment. In this manner, obligations to the amount of millions were contracted for an imaginary consideration.

If old established communities were thus frightened from their propriety, it can hardly be supposed that the rising village of Chicago could escape the contagion. The year 1835 found us just awakened to a sense of our own importance. A short time before, the price of the best lots did not exceed two or three hundred dollars; and the rise had been so rapid, that property could not, from the nature of things, have acquired an ascertained value. In our case, therefore, the inducements to speculation were particularly strong; and as no fixed value could be assigned to property, so no price could, by any established standard, be deemed extravagant. Moreover, nearly all who came to the place expected to amass fortunes by speculating. The wonder then is, not that we speculated so much, but rather that we did not rush more madly into the vortex of ruin. Well indeed would it have been, had our wild speculations been confined to Chicago; here, at least, there was *something* received in exchange for the money of the purchaser. But the few miles that composed Chicago, formed but a small item among the subjects of speculation. So utterly reckless had the community grown, that they chased every bubble which floated in the speculative atmosphere; madness increased in proportion to the foulness of its aliment; the more absurd the project, the more remote the object, the more madly were they pursued. The prairies of Illinois, the forests of Wisconsin, and the sand-hills of Michi-



gan, presented a chain almost unbroken of supposititious villages and cities. The whole land seemed staked out and peopled on paper. If a man were reputed to be fortunate, his touch, like that of Midas, was supposed to turn everything into gold, and the crowd entered blindly into every project he might originate. These worthies would besiege the land offices, and purchase town sites at a dollar and a-quarter per acre, which in a few days appeared on paper, laid out in the most approved rectangular fashion, emblazoned in glaring colors, and exhibiting the public spirit of the proprietor in the multitude of their public squares, church lots, and school lot reservations. Often was a fictitious streamlet seen to wind its romantic course through the heart of an ideal city, thus creating water lots, and water privileges. But where a *real* stream, however diminutive, did find its way to the shore of the lake—no matter what was the character of the surrounding country—some wary operator would ride night and day until the place was secured at the government price. Then the miserable waste of sand and fens which lay unconscious of its glory on the shore of the lake, was suddenly elevated into a mighty city, with a projected harbor and light-house, railroads and canals, and in a short time the circumjacent lands were sold in lots 50 feet by 100 under the name of "Additions." Not the puniest brook on the shore of Lake Michigan was suffered to remain without a city at its mouth, and whoever will travel around that lake shall find many a mighty mart staked out in spots suitable only for the habitations of wild beasts.

If a man were so fortunate as to have a disputed

title, it made no great difference where the land lay, or how slender was his claim; his fortune was made; for the very insecurity of the purchase made it desirable in the eyes of the venturous. A powerful auxiliary to the speculating spirit was the sale of lands by auction. When bodies of men actuated by a common motive, assemble together for a common object, zeal is apt to run into enthusiasm; when the common passion is artfully inflamed by a skilful orator, enthusiasm becomes fanaticism, and fanaticism madness. Men who wish to be persuaded, are already more than half won over, and an excited imagination will produce almost any anticipated result. Popular delusions have carried away millions at a time; mental epidemics have raged at every period of the world's history, and conviction has been ever potent to work miracles. Now the speculating mania was an epidemic of the mind, and every chord struck by the chief performers, produced endless vibrations, until the countless tones of the full diapason broke forth in maddening strains of fascination.

The auctioneers were the high-priests who sacrificed in the Temple of Fortune; through them the speculators spread abroad their specious representations. Like the Sybils and Flamens of old, they delivered false oracles, and made a juggle of omens and auguries.

But the day of retribution was at hand; the reaction came—and the professional speculator and his victims were swallowed up in one common ruin. Trusting to the large sums due to him, the land operator involved himself more and more deeply, until his fate was more pitiable than that of his defrauded dupes.

The year 1837, will ever be remembered as the era of protested notes; it was the harvest to the Notary and the Lawyer—the year of wrath to the mercantile, producing, and laboring interests. Misery inscribed its name on many a face but lately radiant with high hopes; despair was stamped on many a countenance which was wont to be “wreathed in smiles.” Broken fortunes, blasted hopes, aye, and blighted characters; these were the legitimate offspring of those pestilent times. The land resounded with the groans of ruined men, and the sobs of defrauded women, who had entrusted their all to greedy speculators. Political events, which had hitherto favored these wild chimeras, now conspired to hasten and aggravate the impending downfall. It was a scene of woe and desolation.

Temporary relief came in the shape of Michigan money—but like all empty expedients, it, in the end, aggravated the disease it pretended to cure—it seemed a sovereign panacea, but it proved a quack specific.

Let us turn from this sickening spectacle of disaster and ruin. Mad as her citizens had been, Chicago *was* Chicago still. Artificial enterprises had failed, but nature was still the same.

There stood Chicago “in her pride of place”—unmoved and immovable. Though mourning and desolate, she could still sustain an active population. Need I add that SHE HAS DONE IT?

On the 4th of July, 1836, the first ground was broken on the Canal. One steam-boat and two schooners conveyed a numerous company to Canal Port (now Bridgeport), where the ceremony was per-



formed. Thus far this noble work has made good progress—with its great resources there is reason to hope, notwithstanding the narrow spirit of some of our legislators, that it will be urged to a speedy completion. Then shall we see Chicago take her stand among the proudest cities of the nation; and, by the blessing of God, no obstacle can impede her onward march to greatness.\*

In the winter of 1836-7, Chicago became an incorporated city. In April, 1837, William B. Ogden was chosen the first Mayor; in 1838, he was succeeded by Buckner S. Morris, and, in 1839, Benjamin W. Raymond, the present incumbent, was elected.

It would be tedious and unprofitable to detail the growth of the city—suffice it to say that it is probably without a parallel in the history of the world.†

It is honorable to the place, that while the community were struggling for the goods which are of this world, they were not unmindful of their future welfare.

Six churches were organized before or during the year 1836, viz.: The Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Unitarian.

The character of the people was liberal, and they contributed generously towards the support of religion. To this day, all the churches, before enumerated, are in a flourishing condition. It is true the buildings in which the congregations assemble are of mean architecture; but whoever is conversant with the monetary derangements of the last three years, will admit that the absence of costly temples is no evidence of a lack of devotion or liberality.

Nor was education wholly neglected, although woe-

\* See note C.

† See note D.



fully mismanaged. By good fortune, the School Section lay adjoining the city; and, although this land, when sold, had not attained its greatest value, a very considerable fund was raised for the support of schools.

In 1836, a sale was made of a large number of Canal lots. Strangers flocked in from distant quarters, and the prices obtained were foolishly extravagant.

The public spirit of the community is exhibited in its patronage of the press. In 1834, the CHICAGO DEMOCRAT was started by JOHN CALHOUN, and, in 1835, THOS. O. DAVIS commenced the publication of the CHICAGO AMERICAN. These papers still exist, and the AMERICAN is now published daily.

In accommodations for the travelling public, Chicago has made remarkable progress. In 1835, the taverns were miserable in the extreme. The Sauganash was esteemed the best; but the crowd of strangers and the scarcity of provisions rendered every tavern in the place an abode of misery. The luxury of a single bed was almost unknown and the table had no charms for the epicure. But now, a man may "take his ease in his Inn," and indulge in all the luxuries of the East.

In 1834, a bridge was built across the river at Dearborn street, which proved a great public convenience. It was repaired in 1837, at an enormous expense, and, in 1839, was demolished, and a miserable ferry at Clark street substituted. The stock for a new bridge at Clark street, has lately been subscribed, and, it is to be hoped, that the community will not again be compelled to cross the river in mud-scows.

In 1836, a branch of the State Bank was established here, but hitherto that institution has not embellished the city with a banking-house.

In Literature and the Fine Arts, Chicago cannot be said to rank high. The Drama has flourished to some extent, and the place contains a pretty theatre; but, at present, the city cannot afford to sustain a good play-house.

The Institution I have the honor to address, is the only literary association in the City. I trust I shall give no offence when I say that, as at present sustained, the Lyceum does not meet the intellectual wants of the community.

Mr. PRESIDENT, it is necessary that new life and spirit should be breathed into this praiseworthy undertaking. A building should be erected for its use; additions should be made to the library; a well-stocked reading-room should be provided. Then, Sir, would the community become more moral and intelligent; literary enjoyment would take the place of frivolous and injurious pursuits, and the rising generation would shower blessings upon our memories.

I had intended, Mr. PRESIDENT, to touch on various other topics connected with our annals—our valiant and invincible militia—our daring firemen—our enlightened judiciary—our august common council—but I feel that I have already trespassed too far upon the patience of the Lyceum.

In conclusion, then, let me express the hope that our future annals may be worthy of the past. It is true that the elements of prosperity surround us; but let us remember that mere physical greatness is as nothing compared with moral and mental culture. It

is essential to both, that we should be a UNITED people. We should aim at unity of spirit and unity of action; sectional jealousies should be forgotten; selfish considerations should yield to the public good; and, like a band of brothers, we should march onward to that brilliant destiny which the God of nature has ordained for us. Especially should we promote the interests of religion, morality, and education. Then, indeed, shall we arrive at true greatness, and our children will point with honest pride to the Annals of Chicago.

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### POPULATION.

1835.... 3,265	1849.... 23,047	1863.... 160,000
1836.... 3,820	1850.... 28,269	1864.... 169,353
1837.... 4,179	1851.... 34,437	1865.... 178,900
1838.... 4,000	1852.... 38,733	1866.... 200,418
1839.... 4,200	1853.... 60,652	1867.... 220,000
1840.... 4,479	1854.... 65,872	1868.... 252,054
1841.... 5,752	1855.... 80,028	1869.... 273,043
1842.... 6,248	1856.... 84,113	1870.... 298,977
1843.... 7,580	1857.... 93,000	1871.... 334,270
1844.... 8,000	1858.... 00,000	1872.... 364,377
1845.... 12,088	1859.... 90,000	1873.... 465,650
1846.... 14,169	1860.... 112,172	1874.... 475,000
1847.... 16,859	1861.... 120,000	1875.... 525,090
1848.... 20,023	1862.... 138,835	

1885, (estimated by Jno. S. Wright,) 1,000,000.

1911, (estimated by J. N. Balestier,) 2,000,000.

## NOTES.

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A. The following letter from Captain Heald, contains a condensed account of the action. The reader will notice that the retreat was delayed six days after the receipt of orders to evacuate, and that four of these days had elapsed before the arrival of Capt. Wells.

PITTSBURGH, Oct. 23, 1812.

On the 9th of August last, I received orders from Gen. Hall, to evacuate the post, and proceed, with my command, to Detroit by land, leaving it at my discretion, to dispose of the public property as I thought fit.

The neighboring Indians got the information, as early as I did; and came in, from all quarters, in order to receive the goods in the factory store, which they understood were to be given them. On the 13th, Capt. Wells, of Fort Wayne, arrived, with about thirty Miamies, for the purpose of escorting us in, by the request of Gen. Hall. On the 14th, I delivered the Indians all the goods in the factory store, and a considerable quantity of provisions, which we could not take away with us. The surplus arms and ammunition, I thought proper to destroy, fearing they would make a bad use of it, if put in their possession; I also destroyed all the liquor on hand, soon after they began to collect. The collection was unusually large for that place, but they conducted with the greatest propriety until I left the fort.

On the 15th, at 9 in the morning, we commenced our march; a part of the Miamies were detached in front, and the remainder in our rear, as guards, under the direction of Capt. Wells. The situation of the country rendered it necessary for us to



take the beach, with the lake on our left, and a high sand-bank on our right, at about 100 yards distance. We had proceeded about a mile and a-half, when it was discovered that the Indians were prepared to attack us from behind the bank. I immediately marched up, with the company, to the top of the bank, when the action commenced; after firing one round, we charged, and the Indians gave way in front and joined those on our flank. In about 15 minutes, they got possession of all our horses, provisions, and baggage of every description; and, finding the Miamies did not assist us, I drew off the few men I had left, and took possession of a small elevation, in the open prairie, out of shot of the bank, and every other cover. The Indians did not follow me, but assembled in a body, on the top of the bank, and after some consultation among themselves, made signs for me to approach them.

I advanced towards them, alone, and was met by one of the Potawatamie chiefs, called the Black-bird, with an interpreter; after shaking hands, he requested me to surrender, promising to spare the lives of all the prisoners. On a few moments' consideration, I concluded it would be most prudent to comply with his request, although I did not put entire confidence in his promise. After delivering up our arms, we were taken back to their encampment, near the fort, and distributed among the different tribes.

The next morning they set fire to the fort, and left the place, taking the prisoners with them; their number of warriors was between 400 and 500, mostly of the Potawatamie nation, and their loss about 15. Our strength was 54 regulars and 12 militia, out of which, 26 regulars and all the militia were killed in the action, with two women and twelve children. Ensign Ronan and Doctor Voorhis, of my company, with Capt. Wells, of Fort Wayne, to my great sorrow, numbered among the dead. Lieut. Helm, with 25 non-commissioned officers and privates, and 11 women and children, were prisoners when we were separated. Mrs. Heald and myself were taken to the mouth of the river St. Joseph, and, being both badly wounded, were permitted to reside with Mr. Barnett, an Indian trader. In a few days after our arrival there, the Indians all went off to take Fort Wayne; and, in their absence, I engaged a French-

man to take us to Mackinac, by water, where I gave myself up as a prisoner of war, with one of my sergeants. The commanding officer, Capt. Roberts, offered me every assistance in his power to render our situation comfortable while we remained there, and to enable us to proceed on our journey. To him I gave my parole of honor and came on to Detroit, and reported myself to Col. Procter, who gave us a passage to Buffalo; from that place, I came by way of Presque-Isle, and arrived here yesterday.

J. HEALD, *Chaplain.*

**B.** I am since informed, that the picture is entirely overcharged, and so far as it relates to the buildings and population of Chicago in 1823, is gratuitously false. The only families here at the time (except the inmates of the fort) were those of John Kinzie, Esq., Doct. Alex. Wolcott, and Col. Beaubien. These gentlemen resided in comfortable log houses, and no "bark house" was to be found in the place, except such as were used by the Fur Company. A more respectable, peaceful, and comfortable little community could not be found. So much, therefore, of the "narrative" as relates to these particulars, should be placed to account of Major Longbow.

**C.** This is not a mere outpouring of enthusiasm. The Illinois and Michigan Canal, when completed, will render Chicago a place of vast importance. I will briefly advert to a few of the advantages, which will be derived from that great work.

It is well known that no dependence can be placed on the Ohio River as a channel of transportation, while the Lakes afford a certain means of conveyance. All the forwarding business for towns lying on the Illinois River, and for the interior of Illinois, must be done through Chicago. Indeed this is already the case to a considerable extent. But the Canal will also open to us the forwarding business to St. Louis, and all the great towns which are springing up on the upper Mississippi and its branches. Thus will Chicago be the grand avenue for the transportation of merchandise bound westward.

Again, the Chicago market can furnish an almost inexhaustible supply of pine lumber, from the forests of Michigan and Wisconsin. The lumber trade is already very considerable,

and the supply can be increased in proportion to the demand. The towns on the upper Mississippi and its branches, are chiefly supplied with lumber brought from the Alleghany River, a distance of upwards of 1200 miles. The price of pine lumber at St. Louis, I am informed, generally averages \$40, while at Chicago, the average price is about \$14 per thousand. Our lumber trade must consequently be immense.

But the produce of the soil will be the great and unfailing source of prosperity to Chicago. An immense region of country, unsurpassed in fertility, will send its produce to this market. The lines of railroads connecting with the Canal, will bring into cultivation large tracts of country now considered valueless. As a *stock* country, Illinois is unsurpassed; for her vast prairies are capable of sustaining innumerable herds of cattle. It is doing no violence to truth to say, that Chicago will, at no distant day, be the great produce mart of the western world. Wheat, corn, beef, pork, butter, cheese, etc., etc., will come into the place in great abundance. The mines of northern Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin will pour a portion of their treasure into the lap of Chicago. An immense traffic will grow out of the interchange of commodities, and no limit can be assigned to the prosperity of the place. Emigration will open new fields of enterprise "beyond the swelling flood" of the Mississippi, and the influence of Chicago will extend to the base of the Rocky Mountains. We may form some idea of the future growth of the country by looking into the past. Ten years ago, there was scarcely a farm to the north of Chicago. This congressional district then contained only 54,213 inhabitants; it now contains a population of more than 200,000 souls, and numbers over 40,000 voters. Until the last year, we depended, in a great measure, on the East for supplies of provisions. Our pork, flour, butter, etc., were brought from the states of New York and Ohio. Last year, we exported some pork and a small quantity of wheat. When navigation opens in the spring of 1840, we shall send forward a large amount of produce. Every year will increase the value of our exports, and never again will the East supply us with provisions.

Chicago is also destined to be a great thoroughfare. Already have our splendid steamboats attracted travelers from all the



large towns on the Mississippi, including New Orleans, and every year brings with it an increasing throng.

The Illinois and Michigan Canal, connecting the waters of Lake Michigan with the Illinois River, and completing an inland communication by water between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, is nearly half completed. According to the last report of the commissioners, it can be *finished* in 1843, if the necessary means are procured. The Canal will be almost 100 miles in length, 60 feet wide, at surface, and 6 feet deep. It will be fed with the pure waters of Lake Michigan, and for that reason will be very expensive. About \$2,750,000 have already been expended upon the work, and it will require upwards of \$5,000,000 to complete it. Of the amount already expended, about \$500,000 have been derived from the resources of the Canal. These resources consist of farming lands, town lots, wood, timber, etc. The Governor, in his last message, estimates the total cost of the Canal at \$8,118,616.38; the amount of canal property at \$7,034,102.35, leaving a balance of \$1,084,513.93 against the Canal, the greater part of which, he thinks, can be realized from contingent resources. The amount of canal lands not sold is 270,182 acres, which the Governor estimates at \$5,500,000, being sufficient to complete the work. It should be remembered that these lands include several valuable town sites, among which are Chicago, Lockport, Joliet, Ottawa, and LaSalle, the terminating point. The lands lie in alternate sections of a mile square, and extend back five miles on each side of the entire length of the canal. Near LaSalle are large beds of coal, which may be classed among the resources of the canal.

The Chicago River is to be used, for the purpose of a Canal, for a distance of about 4 miles. Then, for about 18 miles, the cutting is very deep, averaging about 20 feet, and that through a clay stratum of the heaviest character. Rock excavations follow, and, doubtless, the quarries laid open by the Canal will hereafter supply Chicago with an indefinite quantity of good building materials. From Chicago to the mouth of the Kankakee, a distance of 50 miles, the whole work is under contract. About 25 miles of comparatively light work, are not as yet laid out, but the remaining portion is under contract. The

revenue which will be derived from tolls, water privileges, coal, etc., cannot fail to be very great.

D. A few facts will illustrate the rapid growth of Chicago. In 1832, the population was less than 100, in 1835, it had reached 2000, and at this time the population exceeds 5000. The increase of population is not now so great as it has been heretofore, but it is sure and steady. In 1835, the number of buildings was very small, Now they amount to upwards of 1000, more than thirty of which are brick. There are about 100 mercantile firms, and lawyers, physicians, and mechanics in due proportion. In the department of manufactures are found a steam sash factory, a steam flour mill, a wind mill, and paper factory. There is a company chartered, for supplying the City with water, two newspaper and job printing offices, and one job and book printing office, one engraver, one bookbinder, one dyer, and, in short, every sort of trade, from the master builder down to the dealer in second-hand clothing.

The increase of commerce may be judged of from the fact, that in 1833, there were only four arrivals of vessels, whose aggregate burthen was only 700 tons, while in 1836, there were 456 arrivals of vessels, whose aggregate burthen amounted to 60,000 tons. Every year adds to the commerce of the place, and several steamboats of the first class ply constantly during the season of navigation, between Buffalo and Chicago. There are also two steamboats owned in the place, which run between Chicago and the several ports of Lake Michigan.

[From the Chicago Tribune, Nov. 25, 1872.]

## A RELIC OF 1840.

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### Balestier's 'Annals of Chicago'—His Address Before the Chicago Lyceum.

Review of the Trade and Aspects of the Period.

Facts and Features of Mayor Raymond's Administration.

Local Issues of the Year.

How the North-Side Was Cut Off, Etc., Etc.

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ON the evening of Jan. 24, 1840, the Chicago Lyceum had gathered in the Lyceum Hall, in the Saloon Buildings, third story, on the corner of Clark and Lake streets, to listen to the address of J. N. Balestier, a member of the Chicago bar, on a theme that came literally home to all his listeners; "The Annals of Chicago;" which expression sounds to us, of the present mature period, like the antiquity of early garden-sauce. It was not until a decade since that the Saloon Buildings, originally built by Captain J. B. F. Russell, in 1836, retired their modest three-story\* frontage of plain brick in favor of the modern block occupied for years by the telegraph-offices. For a long time, Judge Drummond held the Federal Courts in the same old Lyceum Hall.

Many of the active men of this present period of

\* The cut shows a brick building, three stories high, with a front of four stores, three windows each, and the building is 80 feet deep.



our rebuilding, looked up at young Balestier, on the occasion referred to. Grant Goodrich, who will not, for several years to come, patiently allow any one to call him venerable, was the President of the Lyceum, and filled the Chair on that memorable night, on which, in that wintry weather, the people gathered, with their wives and daughters. The bosoms of the auditory fluttered with honest pride, as Balestier went through his manuscript, and held the mirror up to the straggling, forlorn, but hopeful, Garden City. They liked it so well that they did a very good thing for posterity in first passing unanimously a vote of thanks, and then choosing a committee to procure the publication of the "Annals." It was neatly enough brought into typography by Edward Rudd, and, with the not unbecoming self-satisfaction of an author so honored, Balestier took a fair copy, wrote on the margin of the title-page a pleasant note to General George P. Morris, of the New York *Mirror*, asking his acceptance of the small brochure "from one of his correspondents." The little pamphlet had a mail-journey of three weeks before the great New York editor turned over its modest pages, with much the same feeling, probably, with which a New York journalist of to-day would glance at the cheaply-printed, cheerful chirpings of a local lyceum lecture in Sitka. This identical copy, so addressed, drifted back again beyond the lakes, to be stitched into a bound volume in the State Library of Wisconsin, where a summer Rambler among the interior lakes of our sister State came across it, the other day. All honor to the machinery that, superior to political cliques and cabals, has created such a treasure-house of history in

our neighboring State, filled with records of which this waif is one, albeit its antiquity is small alongside some that fill adjoining cases, their years told by centuries.

So, in the breezy capitol that dresses its plumage in the mirrors of three lakes, we turned over Balestier's "Annals." He was an attorney, is still active in his profession in New York City, and was a kinsman of our Kinzies. We judge from his "Annals" that he tried to like Chicago as well as possible; but he certainly did not sit down here to see his predictions come to pass. Prophets seldom do. Jonah tried it at Nineveh, you remember, and failed utterly in sitting out the doom he announced. When the disciples of the Lyceum had gone home, Grant Goodrich, William B. Ogden, Sidney Sawyer, Mark Skinner, John S. Wright,\* and David Hunter drew up one of those graceful, complimentary letters, which Rudd, for Balestier, inserted to front the "bastard title," and the earliest annals of Chicago became a published fact. It is gratifying to record that all these parties named are still living; all are active citizens; several of them are busy in our Great Rebuilding.

The lecturer wisely touches very lightly on the old French parties who used to go stumbling about this New France of two hundred years ago. Probably he foresaw that future generations were to be terribly tried by local annalists who could not box the compass of dates for an almanac, or a handbill, without dragging in poor old Marquette and LaSalle, and the Jesuit fathers. Balestier took Chicago as he found it, a neighborhood only recently disturbed and depressed

\* John S. Wright died, Sept. 26, 1874.

by the heaviest cart-wheels of misfortune in the crash of 1837. He makes a capital and wise review of the great speculative era of 1835, when he was happiest who was able to get deepest in debt; when money was printed like handbills; when paper towns and cities abounded throughout the West; when a future great lake port was confidently located and staked out at the mouth of every creek and streamlet that emptied into Lake Michigan; when the scrambling, racing, chasing crew of land-operators were literally monarchs of all they surveyed, unless somebody jumped their claim. Balestier was happy that all this was past; was thankful that the local crash was no worse; and bravely reckons up the Chicago of the period, which had, he very confidently stated, over five thousand inhabitants, one hundred mercantile firms, two excellent newspaper offices, (here Long John, in a front seat, drew one of his longest smiles, and took two-thirds of the compliment for the *Democrat*); one job office, one engraver, one bookbinder, and one dyer (not counting Thomas and the Doctor). "Of the thousand buildings, upwards of thirty are brick," continues the lecturer; at which we trust civic pride blossomed into applause. He praises the Lyceum; tells what it may become; urges its value to the youth of the place, where yet dramatic shows are only lightly successful, he says. The absolute certainty was presented that the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which, for eighteen years, had been, in some form or other, a matter of public policy and wrangle, would eventually be finished, and be made of incalculable value to the State, and especially to the city. And this, while the sad, melancholy ditch lay the



open grave and Slough of Despond of contractors' hopes and operatives' wages, not to enter upon its only half-completed destiny as a thoroughfare until seven years later. We say half-completed destiny, for the original canal proposed was a "deep cut," whereas "shallow cut" prevailed, enforced by the actual poverty of the times, helped by chicane that struck its roots far back into the animosity against having any canal at all. Something of this opposition is reflected in the shining courage with which Balestier refers to the canal, though he may not have dug down, as we may as well do here, to the twin foundation facts, that, in the Illinois Legislature of 1820 and '21, a movement to bring the canal scheme before the Federal Government as a State measure was openly opposed by Southern Illinoisans, one of whom bitterly denounced any and all such "*inlets for blue-bellied Yankees.*" And, when Congress made the first canal land-grant, in 1822, it contained no more nor less than the magnificent concession of "*a strip of land ninety feet wide through the public lands from the Illinois River to Lake Michigan,*" with the express stipulation that the Federal Government should be at no expense for necessary surveys. All honor to the men who, from such poor beginnings, wrought so effectively that, in 1827, the fresh grant donated 300,000 acres in alternate sections along the same route. But, in 1840, even these acres could not finish the Canal; and the Chicago Lyceum could only take home the cheerful assurance of Balestier on the subject.

Then he went on to tell what might be looked for presently in the way of exports, this population hav-

ing begun to depend less and less each year upon supplies by way of Michilimackinac, and from the Lower Wabash. In that day, a Chicago wheat-corn-er could have been kept and maintained each day by a half-hour's use of a scoop shovel; but no man dreamed of such an enormity in commercial practice.

The lecture wound up with a graceful wreath of compliment to "our valiant and invincible militia" (the Beaubien march to the Bourbon Spring at Riverside must have been fresh in his mind), "our daring firemen" (the chief terror of whose lives was to drag their hand-engines through prairie mud), "our enlightened Judiciary, our excellent Mayor and august Common Council." And then the janitor blew out the oil-lamps, and stumbled home across the prairie, with a tallow dip in a punched tin lantern,—that "light of other days."

We learn, even at this lapse of time, that these "Annals" made their impression, and were talked of as a very good thing actually among the more solemn business of the august Common Council, twelve in number, who met, with Mayor Benjamin W. Raymond, in the Common Council Chamber in the old City Hotel (late the first Sherman House.) This was generous in them, too, for Balestier abused them slightly on the subject that had, in Mayor Raymond's administration, distracted and literally rent the city in twain—"the Bridge question." The lecturer was of the straitest North Side persuasion, by kinship and sympathy. The huge flaps of the first Dearborn street bridge, that used to stand erect, when open, like two insane barn doors, had fallen from decrepitude, and a scow-ferry had been substituted at Clark street.

There were twelve Aldermen, and the South Side actually menaced the over-the-river population with having no bridge at all, "and sarve 'em right," for certain freshly-remembered warehouse schemes on the north bank of the river. But Mayor Raymond was no such man, and he threw the casting vote for Clark street bridge,—a low float affair, which an intoxicated skipper actually drove his schooner sheer over, one inclement fall night, coming up the river with full sheet—besides his own three sheets in the wind. It is amusing to record, in this same connection, though the river is bearing us away from Balestier's address, that a few years later, the West Side, then becoming a power in city control, actually essayed to defeat any and all increase of bridges across the South Branch, the better to secure country trade, in the days when the grain came in country teams. These things read strangely enough in our present Millennial epoch, when jealousy between the great divisions of our city is a thing of the past, and we help one another to parks and street improvements, and other municipal good things, without wrangling and stint. Mayor Raymond has lived to see, even before leaving active and useful life, a new city rising on the site where stood the "thirty brick buildings" of 1840, and from which 18,000 goodly structures were, in a day and night, swept away. The Chicago Lyceum lived to expand into the Young Men's Association, later the Chicago Library Association, from whose ashes is springing the grand Phoenix of a Public Library, plumed with the generosity of the world's bookmakers. And when, in its new Public Library building, to be erected, set all about with the shelved treasures of the world's best literature, some lecturer arises before a Lyceum audience to give the new "Annals of Chicago," he cannot handle his theme more thoughtfully and sensibly than the annalist of 1840, who should be among the invited guests, if J. N. Balestier be still in the land of the living.



# LETTERS OF APPROVAL.

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CHICAGO, *Feb. 23, 1876.*

ROBERT FERGUS, ESQ.: *My dear Sir:*—I have looked over with great interest the copy of the “Chicago Directory, 1839,” which you have kindly handed me, and sincerely thank you for the pleasure the perusal has afforded me. I am surprised to find how many of the persons whose names you give were personally known to me, and still more surprised to find that, thus far, I have not recalled to recollection the name of a person whom I did know that is omitted. I trust you may find encouragement to go on in your enterprise, and reproduce, as far as possible, these early publications, so important in establishing the early history of the Town.

Yours, very truly,

MARK SKINNER.

CHICAGO, ILL., *February 21, 1876.*

ROBERT FERGUS: *Dear Sir:*—I have carefully read every word in your “Chicago Directory of 1839,” and I hasten to thank you for the very great industry by which it is characterized, and to express my great pleasure at its correctness. I was personally acquainted, at that time, with almost every man in the city, and my memory has not yet begun to fail. Besides, I have succeeded in collecting many copies, and parts of copies, of my old Chicago Democrat. And I know what I say when I say you have done your work well.

Yours of olden time,

JOHN WENTWORTH.

CHICAGO, *February 23d, 1876.*

ROB'T FERGUS, ESQ.: *Dear Sir,*—I have carefully examined your “Chicago Directory for 1839,” and am pleased to say that it will compare favorably, for correctness, with any Directory published since. I was, at that time, and for several years previous had been, acquainted with nearly all the residents of the city, and do not recollect the name of any person who has been omitted.

Yours Truly,

JAMES H. REES.

## LETTERS OF APPROVAL.

CHICAGO, *February 22d, 1876.*

MR. ROBERT FERGUS: *Dear Sir,*—I have, with great interest, carefully examined the proof sheets of your re-publication of the "Chicago Directory of 1839" (with which you *then* had much to do), as revised and corrected by yourself and many others, still here, who were then active in embryo Chicago. There are but few corrections that I could suggest, and, on the whole, since the destruction of historical material in the Great Fire of 1871, your publication will, in my opinion, be invaluable as a basis for the history of Chicago. You deserve well of the public, and I trust you may be well repaid for the great labor this publication must have caused you.

Respectfully Yours,

JULIAN S. RUMSEY.

CHICAGO, *February 25th, 1876.*

ROBERT FERGUS: *Dear Sir:*—I have looked over your "Chicago Directory for 1839," with much care, and it gives me pleasure to say that, so far as my recollection serves me, it is quite accurate, and contains the names of all the persons who were then residents of this place. The Directory furnishes much useful information. I hope you may be compensated for your care, labor, and trouble.

Yours, etc.,

E. PECK.

CHICAGO, *February 28th, 1876.*

ROBERT FERGUS, ESQ.: *Dear Sir:*—Allow me to thank you for the pleasure I have derived from a perusal of your very interesting and valuable compilation, "The Chicago Directory of 1839"—the proof-sheets of which you were kind enough to send me. I have examined the work very attentively, and with a view to supply, if needful, any omissions or inaccuracies, but I am pleased to have to say that the thoroughness with which you have done your work leaves me really nothing to suggest.

As you, doubtless, well know, there were few residents of our city in those early days (I question if there was one) that was not personally known to me, and my memory is still green as to all that pertains to that period; when I assure you, therefore, that I have failed to discover a single error either in names, events, or localities, you may safely assume (pardon my seeming presumption in saying so) that there are none.

Your publication will prove a valuable contribution to the literature of early Chicago, and a great help to the future historian. It has afforded me unmixed delight to be thus able to verify my own reminiscences, and I am sure the public will heartily appreciate the service you have rendered them.

I remain, yours, for "auld lang syne,"

MAHLON D. OGDEN.